

government. He devoted his energies to bringing the story to his readers without any fear or favor. He had no interest in "spin".

Mr. Speaker, over the years I have had the privilege of reading Matt Pommer's work, and interacting with him during my service as a state legislator. He is a professional in every sense of the word.

On a lighter note, Matt and I enjoyed the opportunity to work together as "extras" in the film "Chain Reaction" with Keanu Reeves and Morgan Freeman. We were told that Director Andrew Davis preferred to fill the role of "extras" with people who actually worked in the job they were portraying. When he looked for a real journalist, there is little wonder that he found Matt Pommer.

Thank you Matt, for the years of service you have provided to the citizens of the State of Wisconsin and the readers of The Capital Times.

HONORING THE SACRIFICES OF MILITARY FAMILIES

HON. ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, December 18, 2005

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, in the coming weeks, American families will come together to celebrate the holidays and the start of a new year. Together, they will reflect on the events of 2005, and prepare for the challenges of the year ahead.

Sadly, for many families, this season will be a difficult one, and I rise today to pay tribute to those American families whose lives have been personally impacted by ongoing military operations around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my deepest gratitude to the families of the men and women who are currently serving our nation overseas. I add my prayers for their safety and well being. And, I extend my humblest sympathies to the families of those brave soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our country.

In particular, I would like to take this opportunity to honor four American heroes and their families who reside in the Thirteenth Congressional District of Pennsylvania.

Major Jeffrey Toczykowski, age 30, was killed during combat operations in Al Anbar Province, Iraq, on November 3, 2005. He was a dedicated soldier who had asked loved ones to remember that, if he was killed in action, that he died doing something he believed in and that he had no regrets. My thoughts and prayers are with his family in Ambler, Jenkintown, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Sergeant Francis Straub, Jr., age 24, and Specialist John Kulick, age 35, were killed when a mine detonated and their unit received small arms fire while investigating a rocket-propelled grenade incident in Bayji, Iraq on August 9, 2005. Both of these men answered the call to serve—Sergeant Straub had dreams of becoming a Philadelphia Police Officer and Specialist Kulick was the most senior member of the Whitpain Fire Department. My thoughts and prayers are with their families, who live in Philadelphia, Jenkintown, and Dillsburg, Pennsylvania.

Specialist Kurt Krout, age 43, was killed when an improvised explosive device detonated near his military vehicle in Anaconda, Iraq on August 6, 2005. He was a committed soldier who joined the Marines at age 17. He

had reenlisted as a member of the Pennsylvania National Guard in 1995, and volunteered for deployment to Iraq in June 2004. My thoughts and prayers are with his family in Lansdale and Spinnerstown, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Speaker, during this holiday season, I know the dedication of these soldiers will be remembered by their family, friends, loved ones, and the nation. And, I ask my colleagues, and all Americans, to join me in honoring their service and sacrifice for our nation.

VICTORY IN IRAQ RESOLUTION

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H. Res. 612 and to congratulate parliamentary election.

The citizens of Iraq who desire peace and a prosperous future have demonstrated their commitment to those goals by participating in three national Iraqi elections. Reports indicate that Iraqis turned out in unprecedented numbers to vote in yesterday's election. I congratulate them for braving the instability and violence on the streets of Iraq in order to cast their votes.

Today, instead of offering a resolution to express our congratulations and hopes for a democratic Iraq, the Republican leadership has chosen to play politics, offering a divisive resolution. H. Res. 612 does nothing more than reiterate President Bush's failed strategy for Iraq. While all of us support democracy in Iraq, the Republican leadership has rolled over democratic procedures on the House floor, denying Democrats an opportunity to amend this resolution.

In addition, rather than laying out an exit strategy, as was done by Congressman JACK MURTHA almost one month ago, the Republican leadership continues to ignore the growing chaos and violence facing our soldiers. The Majority refuses to even debate this critical issue. Staying the course is a recipe for disaster that endangers our troops and the Iraqi people.

The withdrawal of American troops should begin now. The new Iraqi government has been formed, and it must take responsibility for forging its own path toward stability and democracy. In polls, the Iraqi people have been clear: they do not believe coalition troops are providing stability and security, and they believe it is time for our troops to come home. The U.S. should provide diplomatic and financial support to an international effort to help the Iraqi government provide security and consolidate democracy.

I have been contacted by many of my constituents who understand that H. Res. 612 is nothing more than a political stunt. The Republican Congress is no longer fooling the American people. In overwhelming numbers, they think it was a mistake to go to war in Iraq; they think the Bush Administration mishandled the war; and they don't support this war. Our troops remain far from home, endangered by a growing insurgency. Now that Iraq has a democratically-elected government, it is time for our troops to come home in order to spend the holidays with the ones they love.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, December 18, 2005

Mrs. McCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, because of a family matter, I missed several recent votes. I would like the RECORD to reflect how I would have voted on those votes. Rollcall No. 639—Yea; Rollcall No. 640—Yea; Rollcall No. 641—Yea; Rollcall No. 642—Yea; Rollcall No. 643—Yea; Rollcall No. 644—Nay; Rollcall No. 645—No; Rollcall No. 646—Nay; Rollcall No. 647—Yea; Rollcall No. 648—Yea; Rollcall No. 649—Yea; Rollcall No. 650—Yea; Rollcall No. 651—Yea; Rollcall No. 652—Yea; Rollcall No. 653—No; Rollcall No. 654—Yea; Rollcall No. 655—Yes; Rollcall No. 656—No; Rollcall No. 657—No; Rollcall No. 658—No; Rollcall No. 659—No; Rollcall No. 660—Yes; Rollcall No. 661—No; Rollcall No. 662—Yea; Rollcall No. 663—Yea; Rollcall No. 664—Yea.

VICTORY IN IRAQ RESOLUTION

SPEECH OF

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I must oppose H. Res. 612 because of my great respect and admiration for our men and women serving in Iraq. Resolution 612 endorses an open-ended commitment of U.S. troops in Iraq and embodies President Bush's latest attempt to justify the U.S. involvement in Iraq. The President and his Congressional allies claim that the Iraqi parliamentary elections were a "crucial victory" in establishing a democracy in Iraq. Thus, through this election, is "victory" in Iraq inevitable?

America has heard this type of reasoning before from President Johnson during the Vietnam War. In 1967, as the South Vietnamese freely elected their government, President Johnson then declared the Vietnamese election had established a democracy supported by the Vietnamese people. After this Vietnamese election, 38,000 more Americans died in Southeast Asia. Since May 1, 2003 when President Bush declared our "Mission Accomplished" in Iraq, approximately 2000 more U.S. troops have died in Iraq.

Under this resolution, the call to bring our troops home hinges on a "victory". What is the victory that the President and his Congressional supporters envision for the U.S. in Iraq? This is not a war like our grandparents fought. There is no country to hoist the white flag of surrender. There is no recognized political entity which the U.S. can sign a peace agreement with. Our brave military men and women are trying to build a democracy in a country that views our U.S. troops as occupiers and almost one half of the Iraqi people believe it is justifiable to kill U.S. troops! The U.S. military has been used to prop up a government being threatened by a guerrilla insurgency. With this Iraqi insurgency, I cannot envision an event, a goal or a date where the resolution's "victory" in Iraq can indisputably be achieved.

Every Member of the United States House of Representatives would have supported this